

Ocean Venison, Latest Food Novelty

New York Food Administrator and Museum of Natural History Savants Try All Forms of Whale Meat at Luncheon—Millions Already Are Using It and Like It

OCEAN VENISON is now being introduced in this market by the Food Administration, of which Arthur Williams is the head in New York city. It is taken largely from the saddle, in which are the choicest cuts, but of course many other parts of the animal are available. The prime rib roasts are always boned and sold in relatively small portions, for a whale rib is too heavy even for the suburban beast of burden known as the commuter.

Now that it is likely to be only a few months before whale meat is as much of a commodity as beef, the wonder of it is that people in the United States have not been eating it these many years. The guests at the luncheon organized by Roy Chapman Andrews at the American Museum of Natural History a few days ago enjoyed the various whale dishes and urged that no time should be lost in introducing the meat in this country as an efficient and economical food.

Likened to Other Food Pioneers.

They were as much pioneers in this age and generation as was the man who ate the first oyster and as were the few among the courtiers of Good Queen Bess who maintained, in spite of the wry faces which others made, that the queer root which Sir Walter Raleigh had brought from the New World might after all prove worth the eating. Tradition and prejudice have indeed controlled our dietary habits so long that most of the abundance of the seas has been ignored. Just as the men of Plymouth Rock took a chance on the mussels and thereby were saved from starvation by the treasures found in the sands, so we of the nation which they helped to found may reduce our living costs by avenging Jonah.

Millions of men have long been eating whale meat. The Eskimos take much of it into their systems, although they prefer the blubber, because it is more heat making. The Japanese have held whale meat to be a delicacy and have built extensive canneries for distributing it. When the habit of eating this ocean venison is once formed it becomes a fixed one, for the substance has much to commend it.

Mr. Andrews, who has lived on it for three weeks at a time while on his whaling excursions in the northern seas and off the coast of Nippon, says that the continued use of whale meat produces no discomforts whatever, for it is readily digestible. Whale meat is a deep, rich red and in both flavor and appearance resembles venison.

Its taste is rather gamy. Those who object to this, for there are men and women who do not like the rare and racy savor of the flesh of the creatures of the wild, can overcome the flavor by a few applications or rinsings of water in which salt or soda has been dissolved or by parboiling. At the recent luncheon the guests took their ocean venison straight and relished it.

Feeding Habits Are Cleanly.

The feeding habits of the whale are very cleanly, as it lives mostly on small organisms, which in many species are strained through the meshes formed by the baleen or so-called whalebone in the back of the mouth. As the throat of most whales is very small, despite the tactics which one of the race is supposed to have employed toward Jonah, he is not in search of large masses of matter, as is often the shark, which may become under certain conditions a scavenger of the sea. The meat and the blubber of the whale have indeed a cleanly and sweet odor, and the average Eskimo regards both of them as delicacies above which they acknowledge no superior but American gumdrops.

In composition whale meat is not unlike good beef. It contains about 80 per cent. of water and 10 per cent. of a readily assimilated protein. Of its nutritive part 98 per cent. can be digested, according to the experiments which have been made in laboratories. In the canned form the percentage of water is less than



Whale luncheon at the Museum of Natural History. Left to right—Arthur Williams, New York Food Administrator; Henry F. Osborn, head of the Museum; Rear Admiral Robert E. Peary.

the estimate here given, which is for the fresh meat.

Several canneries established on the Pacific coast, principally in Seattle and in that neighborhood, follow in methods the Japanese canneries, in which the process of preserving the meat has been perfected. The Americans are using at present the flesh which comes from the big back muscles, although there is no reason why practically all the meat should not be employed.

Mr. Andrews says that on a sixty-five ton whale there is likely to be forty tons of lean meat available for food, the balance being bone and blubber. At present about fifteen tons of meat is utilized in a sixty-five ton whale carcass, that on the prime roasting ribs or the saddle.

The meat is steamed and packed in one pound cans and then cooked some more before the cans are sealed and labelled. It darkens as it cooks. When a can is opened the meat disclosed has the appearance of the larded venison by which connoisseurs set store. It does not in any way resemble the corned product conserved in Chicago.

This product, which might appropriately bear the Jonah brand, may be served in all forms in which beef is adapted to the human palate. It can be converted into soups and curries and roasts, and when properly disguised its origin can be completely concealed. There is no fishy flavor about it and no suspicion even of the strong blubberlike taste which those prejudiced against it might expect to discern. In fact the percentage of fat is very low, so that the meat might

seem almost dry as compared with other flesh.

The United States Bureau of Fisheries has been seeking for several months to find dealers with sufficient hardihood to put whale meat on sale, and, as it has done with shark meat and other unutilized sea foods, has offered to send specimen portions on ice to food merchants. Now that the Food Administration folk have evinced such interest in the subject the way for the introduction of whale meat should be very much easier.

It is expected that eventually the fresh or refrigerated meat can be brought on from the Pacific and sold at 12½ cents a pound retail, while the canned product, packed in tins, should cost 18 cents a pound at the grocer's. In these days, when prime beef is bringing 35 or 40 cents a pound in choice cuts and 40 cents is asked for chicken, there may be found good reasons of economy for the use of ocean venison.

It has been supposed for years that the whaling industry had disappeared from the face of the sea. Although New Bedford does not send its time worn craft in quest of the right whales as it did of yore, whaling still continues. The canny Scotch are looking for the monsters within the Arctic circle, while in the Far East the Japanese have developed whale hunting into a great industry.

In northern Japan the canneries use everything about the animal but the blow! The meat is readily marketed, the blubber is tried out for oil, the bones are used for fertilizer and in industry and the rare screen in the mouth is employed for stays and the reinforcement of collars for

feminine wear despite the competition of steel and celluloid.

As far as whaling on our Pacific coast is concerned, it may well be called an infant industry. Although it is difficult to get ships, the companies are doing fairly well and before many weeks they expect to have at least seven craft in commission. With the demand for whale meat growing there seems no reason why eventually there should not be a good supply

Going South.

A GREAT railroad station, the course alive with people; the majority civilians, but mingled with them many soldiers, officers and enlisted men, who are going South, bound back to their service encampments.

Here to see these soldiers off there are many women, old and young; mothers, wives, sweethearts, sisters; mostly serious, some solemn. Till the near approach of train time they stand around, soldiers and women in pairs and in groups, and look at one another and talk; these are the last few minutes before affectionate farewells.

In these pairs and groups one can commonly at a glance discern the relation of the woman to the soldier; easy it is to mark the mother, as she looks at her son, and usually one would undertake to say offhand whether the younger woman with whom the soldier was talking was wife, sweetheart or sister, but sometimes among these younger people one could not be sure till the last moment.

Approaching the gate leading to the train, with only a minute or two to spare, was a young soldier, an enlisted man, a trim, well bred, fine looking young fellow, accompanied by two young women, manifestly his wife and his sister; but which was which it was not in this case easy to say. The soldier was carrying a hand bag, while one of the young women carried another hand bag belonging to him and the other carried his overcoat over her arm.

These three halted at the gate all quite reticent; this was serious business for all of them and now the time was short.

The soldier grasped the hand of the young woman carrying the overcoat and kissed her warmly. Then he turned to the other and grasped her hand and he kissed twice. That seemed to settle the question, but now he turned again to the young woman carrying his overcoat.

As he looked at her she threw the overcoat up over his shoulder and then she threw her arm around his neck and he bent down to her and kissed her once, twice, thrice.

That was his wife.

"Battering the Boche"

(Continued from preceding page.)

elbow and the blood comes out perfectly black. I take the wrist of one and bend it backward and forward until the flow becomes red. Then a bandage is put on and the man is hurried to the base hospital.

About dusk the Boche began to let out another link of their batteries, more and more screaming "I come! I come!" and the wounded were brought in in great numbers. Following this the Boche attacked with the bayonet on the right near where the English joined our lines, but they were held and driven back. This lasted another twenty-four hours, when the Boche retreated.

In my last load was a poilu called Louis. I did not intend to relate the incident, but the dog has made it impossible for me not to.

He was brought in among the last. It was very bad; gas and shrapnel. His leg was bleeding terribly from a cut artery. It seemed impossible to stop it. I was advised to wait a little before taking him to the hospital, as the shelling was intense; but seeing he would die from

loss of blood if I waited, I of course did what any one else would do.

In a jiffy I had him in the car and went like hell. The road was well lit by star shells. I put on the accelerator and flew, and in twenty-four minutes he was on the table and his artery tied and they thought he would live.

I saw him a few days afterward and he said: "My business is gone, my brothers are killed and I have nothing to give you." Then he took the chain off a chair and handed me his dog, who had never left him, who was at Liege, Namur, Verdun, the Marne, the Meuse and the Somme. I nearly choked and thanked him and refused to accept the gift.

"Here," he said, pointing to the new Cross of War on his breast, "that is mine. He is yours. I know all about what you did, my comrade." I went out.

The attack was over. Hundreds of wounded, dying and dead; artillery which had never ceased; mud, blood and cold. One's heart is wrung by the stoicism and the heroism of these splendid French.

That was his wife.